

# **GLADYS NILSSON & HEND SAMIR**

**January 20–March 2, 2024**

Parker Gallery is proud to present an exhibition of new work by trailblazing artists Gladys Nilsson and Hend Samir. Emerging from different backgrounds and generations, this exhibition places their two practices in dialogue for the first time, highlighting each artist's singular approach to world-building.

New works by Nilsson and Samir brim with surreal, erotic and psychological undertones, influenced by reality yet rooted in evolving scenes that span the scope of imaginative possibility. Nilsson (b. 1940 in Chicago, IL) first rose to prominence as a member of the Hairy Who—a group characterized by an interest in vernacular art forms and sharp humor which emerged out of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1966—she has independently developed her singular voice over the past 50 years. Egyptian painter Hend Samir (b. 1986, lives and works in Amsterdam) addresses the social and moral codes observed in her home country and those from her current home. In dialogue, Nilsson's works on paper and Samir's paintings tackle the expansiveness of interior and exterior worlds.

Nilsson's newest large-scale works on paper combine long limbed figures in nearly impossible scenarios, entangled within each other and amongst densely packed trees and foliage. Some are nude or partially clothed, fully immersed in states of discovery, lust or voyeurism. Nilsson has long been fascinated by people's unique mannerisms and individual expressions, which she observes and translates into multidimensional subjects whose eccentricities are lovingly exaggerated.

In Samir's swirling universes, abstract grounds inform the narrative arc of her compositions. People emerge out of and through lush layers of paint, in scenes that are both familiar and totally elusive. Her new paintings employ architectural and domestic elements—the corner of a bedroom, a staircase, lamps and chairs—to ground the composition within lived space, filling them with multiple vignettes of everyday life. Children idle on a bunkbed before bedtime, mothers tend to their children—seemingly benign activities that are abstracted and rendered psychologically charged through Samir's energetic application of marbled paint.

Space is an active element in each artist's work. Dense areas of clouds, trees, leaves, water and other outdoor elements serve as the backdrop for Nilsson's figures, who loom large within the composition, their bodies nearly meeting the paper's edges. Samir's interior spaces are cut open to reveal private moments, lending an observa-

tional, even illicit quality to the work. Both highly sensitive colorists, Nilsson and Samir work beyond the parameters of abstraction and figuration, sampling from their evolving personal lexicons to create utterly original work that touch on the complexities of human behavior.

Gladys Nilsson (b. 1940 in Chicago, IL) lives and works in Chicago, IL. Her work will be the subject of a major traveling retrospective, opening in 2026. Recent solo exhibitions include *Gladys Nilsson: New Works in Watercolor*, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY (2022); *Games*, Hales London, UK (2021); *Old Lady Drawings, 1990–2020*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Out of This World*, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI (2020); and *Honk! Fifty Years of Painting*, Matthew Marks, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY (2020). Recent group exhibitions include *She Laughs Back: Feminist Wit in 1970s Bay Area Art*, curated by Elaine O'Brien, University Galleries, California State University, Sacramento, CA (2024); *Retinal Hysteria*, curated by Robert Storr, Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY (2023); *The Candy Store: Funk, Nut, and Other Art With a Kick*, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA (2022); and *Ways of Seeing: Three Takes on the Jack Shear Drawing Collection*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY (2021). Nilsson's work is held in numerous public collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin; the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Morgan Library, New York; the Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

Hend Samir (b. 1986) is an Egyptian painter based in Amsterdam. Her work has been featured in exhibitions across the United States, Sweden, France, Spain, Egypt and Belgium. Recent solo presentations include *Art Basel Statements*, Basel, Switzerland (2023); *Felix Art Fair*, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *Hide and Seek*, Harkawik New York, NY (2022); *Frieze London*, UK (2021); *Running in a Skewed Daydream*, Harkawik Los Angeles, CA (2021) and *Hula Hoop Labyrinth*, Gallery Misr, Cairo, Egypt (2018). Group exhibitions include *NADA Miami*, Miami, FL (2023); *Daydreaming pressed against a fence*, Harkawik Los Angeles, CA (2023); *NADA Miami*, Miami, FL (2021), the 7th Cairo Video Festival at Medrar Gallery (2017) and *Photo Cairo 6* at CIC (2016). Samir recently completed a residency at the Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Samir's work is held in a number of public collections, including The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Pond Society, Shanghai; The Baltimore Museum of Art; Rubell Museum; and The Bunker ArtSpace.